

of France were mentioned without being specified. It cannot be doubted that Napoleon meant the limits conceded at Frankfort, to which he was well convinced the Allies would not consent, for circumstances were now changed. Besides, what could be meant by the *reasonable equivalent* from England? Is it astonishing that this obscurity and vagueness should have banished all confidence on the part of the Plenipotentiaries of the Allied powers? Three days after the sitting of the 10th of March they declared they could not even enter into a discussion of the verbal protocol of the French Minister. They requested that M. de Caulaincourt would declare whether he would accept or reject the project of a treaty presented by the Allied Sovereigns,¹ or offer a counter-project.

The Duke of Vicenza, who was still prohibited, by secret instructions from coming to any conclusion on the proposed basis, inserted in the protocol of the sitting of the 13th of March a very ambiguous note. The Plenipotentiaries of the Allies, in their reply, insisted upon receiving another declaration from the French Plenipotentiary, which should contain an acceptance or refusal of their project of a treaty presented in the conference of the 7th of February, or a counter-project. After much discussion Caulaincourt agreed to draw up a counter-project, which he presented on the 15th, under the following title: "Project of a definitive Treaty between France and the Allies." In this extraordinary project, presented after so much delay, M. Caulaincourt, to the great astonishment of the Allies, departed in no respect from the declarations of the 10th of March. He replied again to the ultimatum of the Allies, or what he wished to regard as such, by defending a multitude of petty interests, which were of no importance in so great a contest; but in general the conditions seemed rather those of a conqueror dictating to his enemies than of a man overwhelmed by misfortune. As may readily be imagined, they were, for the most part, received with derision by the Allies.

¹ The conditions of this treaty were the boundaries of France before the Revolution. — *Bourrienne*.